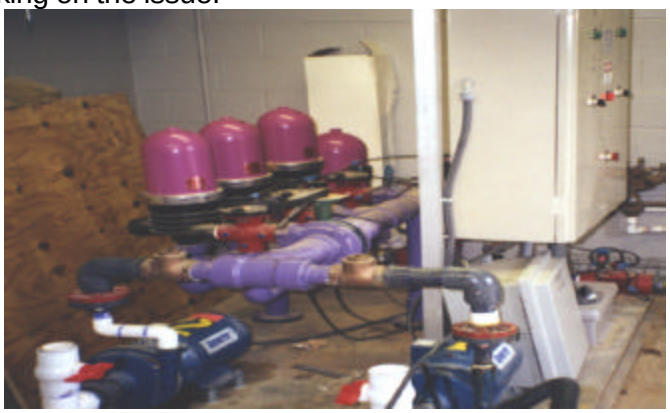
Maryland Nonpoint Source Management Program

Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems (OSDS) Management Efforts

Recently, there has been increased emphasis on management of Onsite Sewage Disposal System impacts in Maryland. Several efforts are underway through funding of various projects with NOAA 6217 and other NOAA funds, Coastal Nonpoint Source Program participation in the Septics Task Force for the new Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategies Development process, and collaborative participation in the development of a Coastal Decision-Makers Workshop on nitrogen reduction from OSDS held in March 2003.

Since a statewide OSDS regulatory approach was defeated in the General Assembly in 2000, Maryland's approach has been to support local government regulatory and management efforts. Over the past two years, Coastal Nonpoint/6217 and Nonpoint Source Program/319 funding has been made available to counties to address the OSDS management issue. Inventories tare being conducted to get a handle on where concentrations of inadequately functioning OSDS may be impacting water quality. The inventories are producing reliable local data on the scope of the problem to enable local governments to pursue local rulemaking on the issue.



Marley Run sewage treatment plant, calvert county

Coastal Nonpoint Source Management Program Holds Decision Makers Workshop

Together with the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategies Development Work Group and the National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Coastal Nonpoint Program held a Coastal Decision-Makers' Workshop entitled: "Reducing Nitrogen Pollution from Septic Systems " on March 12, 2003 at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. This forum was very informative and well attended by numerous counties and state agency staff. Agenda topics included national, regional and local perspectives on:

- Impacts of Septic Systems on Water Quality
- Alternative Technologies
- Management & Policy Issues: Identifying the Problem, Mapping Areas of Special Concern (nutrients), Ensuring Maintenance of Nitrogen-removing Systems, Maintenance Challenges & Options, Land Use Implications of Nitrogen-removing Systems

Forum Highlights

A total of 129 people attended the forum , representing State of Maryland agencies, local municipalities, private firms, citizen groups, the State of Delaware, universities, and fifteen (15) Maryland counties. Attendee response was enthusiastic and indicated a need to expand, focus, and direct this forum to more specific areas

Collaboration Moves Maryland Septic Efforts Forward

In cooperation with the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Department of Natural Resources is using federal Coastal Nonpoint Source Program (Section 6217) and other NOAA funds to help coastal counties manage septic impacts:

1) Seven counties are developing accurate and complete inventories, databases, and maps of properties served by septic systems. The projects address the outdated, incomplete or missing system records and information that have hampered local OSDS management efforts. These funds will enable local governments to reduce the impacts of septic systems and protect environmentally sensitive areas by (a) identifying areas in need of increased monitoring due to potential water quality impacts, (b) identifying areas that should be hooked-up to sewer systems, and (c) targeting homeowners for outreach and education on system maintenance.

Marley Run Sewage Treatment Plant

2) Four counties and one tri-county council are developing OSDS management strategies based upon protection of nitrogen-sensitive waters. The strategies are being designed as transferable examples to help ensure that OSDS are appropriately sited, designed, operated, and maintained. Under this grant, localities will delineate nitrogen sensitive waters; develop an appropriate OSDS management plan; and propose regulatory changes or programs to successfully implement the plan. These program changes could include: incorporating requirements to strengthen the OSDS inspection, maintenance and / or replacement processes, or establishing programs to increase the use of innovative OSDS.

3) The University of Maryland, Center for Environmental Science, has received a grant award to conduct a demonstration study to support local government quantification of septic system input to surface waters. Funds will be used to assess and map the plumes of sewage and septic derived nitrogen within the Choptank and Patuxent Rivers (with a special focus on Island Creek) to assist with planning and targeting of local watershed strategies. The goal is to use the information about the source and distribution of sewage and septic derived nitrogen to develop incentives for the implementation and tracking of coastal nonpoint source management measures, especially where inadequately treated effluent is contributing to the surface water nitrogen loads. The study will augment other long- term water quality improvement efforts at the local level by helping to identify the impacts of housing density and distribution on the nutrient loading from septic systems, and help to elucidate the effectiveness of shared septic facilities.

Mapping Areas of Special Concern For On-site Sewage Disposal System Management

Implemented by P.G county Department of environemntal resources using Section 6217 dollars, this innovative project has the following objectives

-Identify OSDS's within public sanitary sewersheds.
-Identify areas of special concern (ASC)
-Idetify OSDS's that impacts ASC's
-Develop Map of ASC's that the County and local developers can use to plan future development more effectively

STATE OF MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

NOAA